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The Dangerous Game of Baiting the CIA

SPEECH

OF

HON. THOMAS J. DODD

OF CONNECTICUT

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Mr. DODD. Madam President, I have been disturbed, as I am sure many of my colleagues have been, by the virtual epidemic of attacks on the Central Intelligence Agency in recent months.

Some of these attacks have clearly been the product of irresponsible and speculative news reporting by men who are more concerned with the headline value of something that smacks of sensation or scandal than they are with the security of the country.

But there have also been attacks, or sharp criticisms, by commentators of national reputation who are generally careful about their facts but who have apparently been impressed by some of the rumors and stories and inaccuracies which seem to have become credible because they have been repeated so often.

There have also been attacks on the CIA by distinguished Members of Congress which seem to me exaggerated and without foundation. These men are friends of mine, whom I respect and who are greatly respected by the country. Their views are very influential and because of this I feel an obligation to make reply to some criticisms which I feel are unwarranted.

Baiting the CIA almost seems to have achieved the stature of a popular national pastime.

It is a highly dangerous pastime because the CIA is one of the essential elements of our security.

There is also something unbecoming about the pastime, because the CIA cannot defend itself. Attacking the CIA, indeed, is something like beating a man who has his arms tied behind his back. For reasons of national security, the Agency cannot confirm or deny published reports, true or false, favorable or unfavorable. It cannot alibi. It cannot explain. It cannot answer even the most outrageously inaccurate charges.

It was to this situation that President Kennedy addressed himself when he spoke to the CIA personnel at their headquarters in Langley, Va., on November 28, 1961.

Your successes are unheralded—

Said President Kennedy—

Your failures are trumpeted. * * * But I am sure you realize how important is your work, how essential it is—and, in the long sweep of history, how significant your efforts will be judged. So I do want to express my appreciation to you now, and I am confident that in the future you will continue to merit the appreciation of our country, as you have in the past.

The charges that have been made against the CIA in recent months are almost as numerous as they are sensational.

We have been told that the CIA has been running wild, that it has been functioning without control or supervision either by Congress or the administration, that it has been making foreign policy.

The CIA has been criticized for the U-2 overflight.

It has been blamed for the Bay of Pigs disaster.

And it has even been criticized for the anti-Mossadegh coup in Iran and for the overthrow of the pro-Communist Arbenz government in Guatemala.

Whether the critics realize it or not, these charges also constitute an attack on the wisdom and integrity of both President Eisenhower and President Kennedy. It is tantamount to accusing them of passively allowing an executive agency to function without control or supervision, and to make foreign policy—in other words, to usurp the President's own authority. This is patently ridiculous. Neither President would ever have permitted such a thing.

I propose to say a few words about some of these charges.

I feel that I am in a position to do so, because in the course of my travels around Europe, Asia, and Africa, I have come to know many of the CIA's field representatives, and, from long conversations with them, I have some appreciation, I believe, of the work they do. In addition, I know something of the headquarters operation because senior officers of the Agency have on a number of occasions appeared before the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security and have given testimony of vital significance.

If the overall quality of an agency may be judged from the quality of the men who compose it, then the CIA would have to be given a triple A rating. I have never encountered in any Government agency a body of men whose ability and dedication impressed me more.

Perhaps the most popular charge directed against the CIA is that it operates completely without congressional oversight or supervision. It is this charge that has given rise to the clamor for a congressional watchdog committee.

This charge is totally and demonstrably untrue. Indeed, the CIA is probably one of the most supervised agencies in the Government.

In both the House and Senate there are special subcommittees of the Armed Services Committee and of the Appropriations Committee that oversee the activities of CIA.

In the House these subcommittees are headed by Representatives CARL VINSON and CLARENCE CANNON; in the Senate they are headed by Senator RUSSELL and SENATOR HAYDEN. These men are among the most knowledgeable and conscientious legislators our Nation has produced; and I, for one, am willing to abide by their judgment on matters which, for reasons of security, cannot be revealed to all Members of Congress.

The Director of the CIA and the chairman of the House and Senate subcommittees have frequent meetings during the course of the year. The subcommittees are advised and fully informed of special or unusual activities. They are also informed upon the receipt of significant intelligence.

In 1963, the Director of Central Intelligence or his deputy, Gen. Marshall S. Carter, appeared before congressional committees on some 30 occasions. In addition to briefings of the CIA subcommittees in the House and Senate, these appearances included briefings on subjects of special interest to the Joint Committee on Atomic Energy, the Foreign Affairs and Foreign Relations Committees, the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee, and other committees.

I recall the clamor that immediately arose when our U-2 plane was shot down over Soviet territory in May of 1960. Many people jumped to the conclusion that the CIA had been operating on its own, without the authorization of President or Congress. The U-2 flights were charged with endangering the security of the Nation, when, in fact, they had de-

fended us against the possibility of a surprise missile attack.

President Eisenhower put an end to the speculation about the lack of Executive authorization by informing the press that he had personally approved the U-2 program. Unfortunately, it did not receive quite as much attention when Representative CANNON on May 10 rose to inform the House that the House subcommittee was fully apprised of the project, had approved it, and had recommended the funds for it.

Let me quote his words on that occasion, because I think they constitute an adequate response to all those who, in ignorance of the facts, still charge that the CIA operates without congressional supervision.

This is what Representative CANNON said:

The plane was on an espionage mission authorized and supported by money provided under an appropriation recommended by the House Committee on Appropriations and passed by the Congress.

Although the Members of the House have not generally been informed on the subject, the mission was one of a series and part of an established program with which the subcommittee in charge of the appropriation was familiar, and of which it had been fully apprised during this and previous sessions.

The appropriation and the activity had been approved and recommended by the Bureau of the Budget and, like all military expenditures and operations, was under the aegis of the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States, for whom all members of the subcommittee have the highest regard and in whose military capacity they have the utmost confidence.

It seems to me that what some Members of Congress have been complaining about in advocating a joint congressional watchdog committee is that they have been unaware of certain activities conducted by the CIA. But the information gathered by CIA and the activities conducted by it must, of necessity, be confined to a careful selected and re-

stricted committee. If this information were made available to all Members of Congress, the security essential for national defense would cease to exist.

The Members of Congress are all trustworthy; but a secret ceases to be a secret when it is shared by more than 500 people.

Even if a joint congressional watchdog committee were established, it would have to observe the same rules of secrecy that today govern the activities of the House and Senate subcommittee; and those Members of Congress who today complain that they do not know what the CIA is doing, would still find that they know precious little about it. Which, I may say, is the way things ought to be.

Whether or not a joint committee of Congress could more effectively supervise the activities of the CIA than the House and Senate subcommittee now in existence is a purely mechanical question which I frankly consider to be of a third-rate importance. This proposal appears to be based on the false assumption that the CIA has engaged in unauthorized activities. It also casts doubt upon the competence and dedication of the distinguished Members of the House and Senate who now serve on the two subcommittees.

As for the oft-repeated charge that even the President does not know what the CIA is doing, let me quote a few paragraphs from the National Security Act of 1947, under which the Central Intelligence Agency was established:

There is hereby established under the National Security Council a Central Intelligence Agency with a Director of Central Intelligence, who shall be the head thereof.

The National Security Act further provides in section 102(d):

For the purpose of coordinating the intelligence activities of the several Government departments and agencies in the interest of national security, it shall be the

duty of the Agency, under the direction of the National Security Council—

(1) to advise the National Security Council in matters concerning such intelligence activities of the Government departments and agencies as relate to national security;

(2) to make recommendations to the National Security Council for the coordination of such intelligence activities of the departments and agencies of the Government as relate to the national security;

(3) to correlate and evaluate intelligence relating to the national security * * *;

(4) to perform, for the benefit of the existing intelligence agencies, such additional services of common concern as the National Security Council determines can be more efficiently accomplished centrally;

(5) to perform such other functions and duties related to intelligence affecting the national security as the National Security Council may from time to time direct.

The text of any piece of legislation makes dry reading, but I have gone to the trouble of reading these paragraphs of the National Security Act for the record because they repeatedly make it clear that the CIA functions under the direction of the National Security Council, and as an arm of the National Security Council.

They also make it abundantly clear that the CIA was to have duties broader than the simple gathering of intelligence data, operating under the direction of the National Security Council.

The wording of the National Security Act was a reflection of the growing recognition that we cannot compete with communism if we confine ourselves to orthodox diplomacy and orthodox intelligence collection.

Over and over and over again, it has been demonstrated that a handful of trained Communists can seize control of a trade union or a student federation, or for that matter, of a country. The fact that the overwhelming majority of the people are non-Communists or anti-Communists has, in most such situations, not seriously impeded them because the

opposition generally lacks organization, lacks know-how, lacks discipline, lacks funds.

In every country that has been taken over by the Communists or that has been menaced by Communist takeover, there have always been men of understanding and of courage who are prepared to risk their lives for freedom. There have been situations, and there will, I am certain, be situations in the future, in which some sound advice plus some limited assistance in the form of funds, or even arms, may make the difference between victory or defeat for the forces of freedom.

If we are not prepared to give this assistance to those who share our beliefs, then we might as well run up the flag of surrender today: because it can be predicted as a certainty that the Communists will move without serious opposition from one triumph to another.

I do not propose to draw up a scorecard of CIA victories and CIA defeats. I do not know for certain whether they played any role in the uprising that overthrew the pro-Communist government of President Arbenz in Guatemala. Nor do I know whether the Agency was in any way connected with the overthrow of the lunatic Mossadegh regime in Iran in 1953. But I would like to discuss these two events because I consider them to be outstanding examples of the kind of perilous situation I have just described.

In the case of Guatemala, the Arbenz government, which had been elected on a nationalist and reform program, was moving, in a manner later to be emulated by Castro, toward the complete communization of the country. As the government introduced more radical measures, it lost its hold over the people and over the armed forces. But the regime would not have toppled had it not been for the courageous action of a handful of patriots under Col. Castillo Armas,

who invaded Guatemala from Honduras in 1954.

When this small band of determined patriots established themselves on Guatemalan soil, the Arbenz regime collapsed like a house of cards. Hardly a shot was fired in its defense, so completely without support was it among the people and among the Guatemalan armed forces.

A similar situation existed in Iran under Mossadegh in 1953. Mossadegh had come to power as a Nationalist. But his nationalism was of the lunatic variety that was prepared to give carte blanche to the Communists in return for their support. Had he remained in power another year, it is probable that today Iran would be on the other side of the Iron Curtain.

In August 1953, mass demonstrations against the Mossadegh regime erupted in Teheran. Within 48 hours, the regime had been swept out of power, the Communist Tudeh Party had been crushed, and wildly cheering throngs hailed the return of the young Shah to his throne.

If the CIA did have a role to play in Guatemala and Iran, then it played its role successfully. It inflicted two great defeats on the Communists and thereby saved two vital countries from slipping into the Communist orbit. Is this something we should apologize for? No, on the contrary, it is something of which every American should be proud.

There are some people who would have us place an absolute prohibition on any form of assistance to the forces of freedom in other countries in the name of "nonintervention."

Some of these are of the absolute pacifist variety, who would rather let the Communists take over the world than fight against them.

Others are muddleheaded moralists, who might be willing to fight if their own country were threatened by a Com-

munist takeover, who are prepared to admit that the Communists engage in massive subversive activities of every kind, but who, for some strange reason, consider it wrong for the United States to do anything about it.

At least a few of the critics of the CIA's operations are unquestionably fellow travelers and Communists.

What is most damaging and most perplexing, however, is the criticism that comes from Members of Congress who are staunch anti-Communists, who do not believe that the United States should stand by, indifferent and supine, while the Communists proceed to take over in other countries, but who, nevertheless, argue that the CIA should not have an operational function. They say that if the United States is to conduct operations designed to meet the Soviet subversive threat, this should be done by a separate agency.

Once the need for clandestine operations is conceded, I frankly do not see the importance of the argument that they should be conducted by a separate agency. In either case, the United States would still be involved in the business of covert operations which so disturbs the ultramoralist critics of the CIA. From a strictly practical standpoint, moreover, I believe that grave harm would be done by separating the conduct of clandestine operations from the careful processing of intelligence which must govern such operations.

It may disturb some people, but I think it can be stated as a certainty that many countries that remain free today would not be free if it had not been for the CIA.

The U-2 flights which the CIA conducted with such outstanding success for some 4 years before the shooting down of Gary Powers also disturbed some of our ultramoralists. But I think that the vast majority of the American people take great pride in the knowledge

that we had been able to penetrate Soviet secrecy.

The CIA has been attacked from many different directions for the role it played in the Bay of Pigs invasion. I am not saying that the CIA is blameless or that it has made no errors. But I do oppose what appears to be a mounting tendency to shift all the blame for the Bay of Pigs disaster onto the much abused head of the CIA, because the record made it clear that many people shared the blame.

Essentially, it failed because we had not made the decision that it must not be permitted to fail.

This is the position I took in speaking on the floor of the Senate on April 24, 1961, hard on the heels of the disaster; and since that time and up to this minute, no information has been adduced which would lead me to revise this position.

The propaganda campaign against the CIA reached a crescendo during the recent Vietnamese crisis. Last October 4, an article written by a correspondent for an American newspaper chain charged that the CIA had been subverting State Department policy in Vietnam, and that John Richardson, the CIA man in Saigon, had openly refused to carry out instructions from Ambassador Lodge.

The correspondent who wrote this article was guilty of openly identifying a CIA representative abroad, thus reducing, if not destroying, his potential usefulness forever. Visiting Congressmen and members of the press may sometimes know the identity of the CIA representative, but it has been taken for granted that they do not reveal his identity to the public.

To the best of my knowledge, this was the first instance in which an American correspondent has been guilty of this flagrant breach of the ethics of security.

Moreover, these sweeping charges against an important agency of the Gov-

ernment, and against a man's integrity, were obviously based on a one-sided presentation from some official source. Mr. Richardson and the CIA could not defend themselves. I have always taken it for granted that American newspapermen in any controversial situation endeavor to obtain the facts from both sides, and all the more so when such sweeping accusations are involved. Not only have I taken it for granted, but it is also true what the vast majority of our newspapermen do. But the correspondent in question apparently considered this unnecessary.

In the third place, the charges against Mr. Richardson were a tissue of falsehoods. President Kennedy, when he was asked about the charges against the CIA and Mr. Richardson at his press conference of October 12 said:

I must say I think the reports are wholly untrue. The fact of the matter is that Mr. [CIA Director John] McCone sits in the National Security Council. I imagine I see him at least three or four times a week, ordinarily. We have worked very closely together in the National Security Council in the last 2 months attempting to meet the problems we face in South Vietnam. I can find nothing, and I have looked through the record very carefully over the last 9 months, and I could go back further, to indicate that the CIA had done anything but support policy. It does not create policy; it attempts to execute it in those areas where it has competence and responsibility. I know that the transfer of Mr. John Richardson [CIA official in Saigon] who is a very dedicated public servant has led to surmises, but I can just assure you flatly that the CIA has not carried out independent activities but has operated under close control of the Director of Central Intelligence, operating with the cooperation of the National Security Council and under my instructions.

So I think while the CIA may have made mistakes, as we all do on different occasions, and has had many successes which may go unheralded, in my opinion in this case it is unfair to charge them as they have been charged. I think they have done a good job.

President Kennedy's characterization of Mr. Richardson, I can wholeheartedly endorse from my personal knowledge of Mr. Richardson. In most countries I have visited, the briefings by CIA representatives have been limited to an hour or two. But in May 1961, when I was in the Far East, Richardson briefed me for some 7 or 8 hours, all told. Certainly, it was the most detailed, most balanced, most knowledgeable briefing I have ever been given. But I was even more impressed by Mr. Richardson as a man than by his exceptional competence as an intelligence officer. Indeed, of all the hundreds of people in the American service whom I have met in the course of my travels through Europe, Africa, and Asia, I can recall no one for whom I formed a higher esteem than John Richardson.

There is a final word I wish to say in this connection. It is clear that the article in question originated in some official source. It had to. The official who was guilty of giving out this story to the press was himself guilty of violating the rules of security as well as the ethics that should govern relations between government departments. This officer, in my opinion, should be identified and dismissed.

The time has come when Members of Congress and members of the press must take stock of the growing campaign against CIA and of the part they themselves may have played in forwarding this campaign.

I am not suggesting that the CIA should be immune to criticism because of the sensitive nature of its operations. No government agency should be immune from criticism.

I do believe, however, that there has been far too much sensationalism, far

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too many inaccuracies, and far too little concern for the national security in some of the criticism that has heretofore been made of the CIA.

I believe that, before we indulge in criticism of the CIA, we should take into account the fact that it cannot defend itself. We should also take into account the fact that every critical statement, whether accurate or inaccurate, will be picked up by the special bureau of the Soviet secret police whose task it is to discredit the CIA, and will be put to work through all the information and propaganda channels open to the Kremlin and through all its agents in the world's news media.

Because these things are so, we all share a special responsibility, if we feel constrained to criticize the CIA, to check our facts painstakingly, to weigh our words carefully, and to speak with restraint. If we have questions or complaints, I believe that, before taking them to the mass circulation press, we should discuss them with the Director of the CIA, or his deputy, or with the chairmen of the four House and Senate committees charged with the supervision of the CIA's activities. And if, after checking in this manner, there is any one of us who still considers it necessary to speak out against certain policies of the CIA, the proper place to do it would be on the floor of Congress rather than on television, or through the mass circulation periodicals. This would provide an opportunity for rebuttal and debate, and the press accounts, hopefully, would reflect all sides of the discussion.

For whatever its errors and shortcomings may be, I believe, with President Kennedy, that the CIA will in the future continue to merit the appreciation of our country, as it has in the past.